

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:GROBERTS
APPROVED BY EUR:JEGOODBY
EUR/WE:EBEIGEL
EUR/NE:DWOOLFLEY
EUR/SOV:KENT BROWN
EUR/CE:WWOESSNER
PM:DGOMPERT
EUR/P:WGEHRON
S/P:PKAPLAN
OSD/ISA:WSLOCOMBE
NSC - RHUNTER L/PM:MMATHESON ACDA/WEC:COL. STAPLES
ICA:DELL PENDERGRAST (SUBST.) PA/PRESS:MBADER
EUR/RPM:SJLEDOGAR

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TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
USAFE RAMSTEIN GE PRIORITY
USDOCOSOUTH PRIORITY

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SUBJECT: DEPLOYMENT OF STABALLOY MUNITIONS FOR
A-10 AIRCRAFT
REF: 221419

1. THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE WILL DEPLOY A-10 GROUND
ATTACK AIRCRAFT TO EUROPE BEGINNING IN EARLY 1979. AN
ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF THE A-10 WEAPON SYSTEM IS THE
30MM GATLING GUN, WHICH FIRES AN ANTI-TANK ROUND WITH
A STABALLOY PENETRATOR ELEMENT. STABALLOY, BECAUSE
OF ITS DENSITY, CAN PENETRATE ARMOR MUCH MORE EFFECT-
IVELY THAN OTHER HEAVY METALS. STABALLOY IS THE NAME

GIVEN A METAL ALLOY THAT IS MADE PRIMARILY OF DEPLETED URANIUM (DU), WHICH IS COMBINED WITH OTHER METALS TO GIVE IT THE DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS. THE STABALLOY MUNITION FOR THE A-10 AIRCRAFT PRESENTS NO SIGNIFICANT RADIATION HAZARD. THE DU COMPONENT OF STABALLOY SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH SPENT URANIUM (A REFUSE FROM ATOMIC POWER PLANTS), WHICH IS HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE. DU'S SAFETY IS DEMONSTRATED BY ITS USE IN COUNTERWEIGHTS IN SOME COMMERCIAL BOEING 747 AIRCRAFT AND AS RADIATION SHIELDING IN CONTAINERS FOR RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS. ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION IS PROVIDED SEPTEL.

2. NEVERTHELESS, THE FACT THAT "DEPLETED URANIUM" IS A COMPONENT MAKES STABALLOY SUSCEPTIBLE TO MIS-INTERPRETATION AND AN EASY TARGET FOR THOSE INTENT ON EMBARRASSING THE US AND ITS NATO ALLIES. IN ADDITION, UNDER THE US CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, STABALLOY MUNITIONS MUST HAVE A RADIOACTIVITY LABEL. (THE CODE'S STIPULATION FOLLOWS FROM THE US NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S REQUIREMENT THAT SUBSTANCES OF EVEN VERY LOW RADIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY--INCLUDING
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THOSE SUCH AS LUMINOUS WATCH DIALS WITH PROMETHIUM OR TRITIUM--HAVE SUCH MARKINGS. IN THE CASE OF STABALLOY MUNITIONS, THE MARKING INDICATES "LOW SPECIFIC ACTIVITY" MATERIAL.) IN INSTANCES WHERE SUCH AMMO HAS COME TO PUBLIC ATTENTION, HERE AND ABROAD, NEWS COVERAGE HAS AT TIMES BEEN MISINFORMED, ALARMIST OR, IN HOSTILE MEDIA, STRONGLY BIASED.

3. THE FIRST SHIPMENT OF STABALLOY MUNITIONS IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN BREMERHAVEN IN MID-SEPTEMBER 1978. WE BELIEVE THAT, GIVEN THE LIKELY POLITICAL SENSITIVITY TO DU, WE SHOULD CONSULT WITH HOST GOVERNMENTS AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL ON USAF PLANS TO INTRODUCE STABALLOY MUNITIONS INTO THEIR COUNTRIES.

APPROACH SHOULD BE TO ELICIT HOST GOVERNMENT VIEWS ON (A) THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS TREATMENT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MUNITIONS, AND (B) THE POSSIBLE BEARING OF HOST GOVERNMENT LAWS ON THE TRANSPORTATION, HANDLING, AND STORAGE OF THE MUNITIONS. FYI: TO DATE, OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH UK, FRG, AND ITALY ON PLANNED A-10 DEPLOYMENTS HAVE BEEN CONFINED TO THE MILITARY LEVEL, AND HAVE NOT, TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, TAKEN UP THE QUESTION OF STABALLOY MUNITIONS EXPLICITLY. END FYI.

4. FOR EMBASSY BONN: CHARGE SHOULD CONSULT WITH APEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE USING POINTS PARA 7. DEPARTMENT

HAS DISCUSSED THIS WITH AMBASSADOR STOESEL, WHO AGREES FRG SHOULD BE CONSULTED AT DEFENSE MINISTER LEVEL. WE ARE VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF THIS ISSUE IN THE FRG, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY THE ERW. WE BELIEVE THAT WE CAN BEST MINIMIZE POLITICAL PROBLEMS BY KEEPING THE FOCUS ON THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF DEPLOYMENT AND BY CENTERING
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OUR APPROACHES ON THE MOD. ALTHOUGH AN ARGUMENT MIGHT BE MADE THAT SHIPMENT SHOULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER OCTOBER STATE ELECTIONS IN THE FRG, WE BELIEVE BUDGETARY AND SCHEDULING DELAYS INVOLVED WOULD VIRTUALLY GUARANTEE LEAKS AND ADVERSE PUBLICITY. WE THEREFORE PREFER TO HOLD TO THE SEPTEMBER SHIPPING DATE.

5. FOR EMBASSY LONDON: AMBASSADOR OR CHARGE SHOULD CONSULT AT DEFENSE OR FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL.

6. FOR ROME: CONSULTATION SHOULD BE AT POLICY LEVEL IN DEFENSE AND/OR FOREIGN MINISTRY.

7. ADDRESSEE POSTS SHOULD USE THE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS IN APPROACH TO HOST GOVERNMENTS. YOU SHOULD ALSO DRAW ON THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTAINED IN Q'S AND A'S (SEPTEL) IN RESPONDING TO HOST GOVERNMENT QUESTIONS.

-- THE US AIR FORCE PLANS IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO BEGIN PREPOSITIONING SPARE PARTS, EQUIPMENT AND AMMUNITION IN THE UK, FRG AND ITALY IN ANTICIPATION OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF US A-10 AIRCRAFT TO EUROPE. THE AIRCRAFT WILL BE BASED IN THE UK, WILL ROTATE FORWARD ROUTINELY TO FORWARD BASES IN THE FRG, AND WILL TRAIN AT AVIANO AIR BASE IN ITALY. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST BASING OF THE A-10 OUTSIDE THE US. US MILITARY OFFICIALS OVER THE PAST YEAR HAVE DISCUSSED THIS PLANNED A-10 DEPLOYMENT WITH YOUR MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

-- DEPLOYMENT OF A-10 AIRCRAFT TO EUROPE SHOULD GREATLY ENHANCE THE POTENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS OF NATO AIR FORCES
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AGAINST WARSAW PACT GROUND FORCES, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS THEIR ARMORED THREAT. CENTRAL TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE A-10 WEAPONS SYSTEM IS ITS 30MM GATLING GUN AND ITS ARMOR-PIERCING ROUND, WHICH HAS A STABALLOY PENETRATOR. THE STABALLOY ROUND IS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST ARMORED VEHICLES BECAUSE OF ITS EXTREME DENSITY

AND SPECIFIC WEIGHT WHICH IS GREATER THAN LEAD. THE ROUND OPERATES ON THE KINETIC ENERGY PRINCIPLE OF PROPELLING DENSE MATERIAL AT HIGH VELOCITY.

-- STABALLOY IS THE NAME OF A METAL ALLOY MADE PRIMARILY OF DEPLETED URANIUM, WHICH IS COMBINED WITH TITANIUM TO GIVE IT THE DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS.

THE STABALLOY ROUND IS A CONVENTIONAL MUNITION AND DOES NOT REPEAT NOT CONSTITUTE ANY SIGNIFICANT RADIOLOGICAL HAZARD.

-- THE US AIR FORCE SURGEON GENERAL HAS DETERMINED THAT, AT THE SURFACE OF ITS JACKET, THE EXPOSURE RATE OF A STABALLOY ROUND IS ONLY .2 MILLIROENTGEN PER HOUR, MEASURED THROUGH 7 MILLIGRAMS PER CENTIMETER SQUARE. THE US OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADM'N HAS ESTABLISHED AN ACCEPTABLE EXPOSURE RATE OF 18.75 REMS PER 3 MONTHS FOR HANDS AND 1.25 REMS PER 3 MONTHS FOR THE HEAD AND TRUNK. BASED ON THESE FIGURES, A PERSON HOLDING A STABALLOY ROUND IN HIS HAND 24 HOURS A DAY FOR 3 MONTHS WOULD RECEIVE ONLY 2.3 PERCENT OF THE ALLOWABLE EXPOSURE.

- AS REGARDS THE TRANSPORATION, HANDLING, AND STORAGE OF STABALLOY, A PERSON'S ACTUAL EXPOSURE TO THIS LOW LEVEL OF RADIOACTIVITY WOULD BE FURTHER REDUCED BY (A) THE STEEL CASE IN WHICH THE MUNITIONS ARE TRANSPORTED AND STORED, AND (B) THE SHARP DECREASE IN DU'S RADIOACTIVITY AT ANY DISTANCE FROM THE MATERIAL. THUS, INCREASING THE NUMBER OF ROUNDS TO WHICH A PERSON IS
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EXPOSED WOULD NOT SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE RADIOLOGICAL DOSAGE. BECAUSE OF THIS LOW EXPOSURE, NEITHER PROTECTIVE GARMENTS NOR SHIELDING IS REQUIRED DURING HANDLING OF STABALLOY MUNITIONS.

-- AS REGARDS A POSSIBLE RADIOLOGICAL HAZARD RESULTING FROM STABALLOY MUNITIONS USE IN COMBAT, NO SIGNIFICANT HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE FORESEEN. ANY CONTAMINATION OF LAND WOULD BE LIMITED AND EASILY DEALT WITH.

- ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF ROUNDS WOULD BE FIRED AT ANY ONE TARGET. THOSE THAT MISSED WOULD REMAIN INTACT OR BREAK INTO LARGE FRAGMENTS. THOSE ON THE SURFACE OR TURNED UP BY FARMING COULD BE REMOVED EASILY. THOSE BURIED BELOW THE PLOWING DEPTH WOULD BE OF NO CONSEQUENCE.

- STABALLOY PENETRATORS STRIKING A TARGET WOULD BE BURNED AND WOULD PRODUCE OXIDES. THESE WOULD BE DISPERSED OVER THE TARGET OR SOIL AND WOULD, EXCEPT IN

LOCALIZED TARGET AREAS SUCH AS A TANK MOTOR POOL, BE LOST IN THE BACKGROUND RADIATION LEVEL PRESENT NATURALLY IN THE SOIL. ANY LOCALIZED CONCENTRATION COULD BE REMOVED OR DISPERSED BY DEEP PLOWING.

SAF PLANS CALL FOR THE STORAGE OF STABALLOY AMMUNITION IN THE UK, FRG AND ITALY FOR USE ONLY IN ACTUAL COMBAT. WE PLAN NO TRAINING USE OF THE AMMUNITION, GIVEN ITS HIGH COST, AND DO NOT PLAN TO UPLOAD IT EXCEPT IN CONTINGENCY OR WARTIME SITUATIONS.

-- DESPITE THE FACT THAT STABALLOY CONSTITUTES NO RADIOLOGICAL HAZARD, THE US WANTS TO INSURE THAT USAF
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PLANS ARE CONSISTENT WITH HOST GOVERNMENT LAWS.

-- WE ALSO WANT TO COORDINATE WITH YOU ON THE PUBLIC INFORMATION ASPECTS OF THE MUNITIONS, GIVEN THE POTENTIAL FOR PUBLIC MISUNDERSTANDING AND DISTORTION BY THE SOVIETS AND OTHERS. WE WILL DEVELOP WITH YOU THE ANSWERS TO ANY QUESTIONS WHICH MAY ARISE IN THE PUBLIC ARENA FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DEPLOYMENT. (Q'S AND A'S IN SEPTEL MAY BE PROVIDED TO GOVERNMENTS, BUT ARE NOT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE IN THEIR PRESENT TECHNICAL FORM.)

- WE PROPOSE TO ANNOUNCE THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE A-10 MUNITION AS A ROUTINE DEFENSE MATTER THROUGH THE RELEASE OF THE DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT (TEXT IN SEPTEL MAY BE PROVIDED TO GOVERNMENTS). THIS WOULD BE DONE SIMULTANEOUSLY THROUGH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICES AT EUCOM IN STUTTGART, GERMANY, AND AT RAF MILDENHALL, UK. THE RELEASE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR SIMULTANEOUS PICK-UP IN WASHINGTON. RELEASE IS PLANNED FOR 2-3 DAYS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST SHIPMENT IN THE FRG.

- CURRENT PLANS CALL FOR THE FIRST SHIPMENT TO ARRIVE IN BREMERHAVEN ON OR AFTER SEPTEMBER 10. SHIPMENTS ARE PLANNED FOR THE UK AND ITALY IN LATE 1978 OR EARLY 1979.

-- US BELIEVE IT IS NECESSARY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THESE PLANS TO GIVE NEEDED CAPABILITY TO THE A-10. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WANTED TO GIVE HOST GOVERNMENTS A FULL AND ADVANCED EXPLANATION OF THESE PLANS AND TO COORDINATE OUR PUBLIC POSITION.

8. FYI: FIRST IN SERIES OF THREE CA0LES. END FYI.

CHRISTOPHER
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